

# **WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

## **Minutes**

**April 8, 2014**

Members present: Ray Guenter, Linda Hanson, Connie Melo, Donna Sterling, Ted Thomas, Philip Walker  
Members absent: Robert Kennedy, Ruth Kurien, Ellen Phillips  
Staff present: Kathleen Faroni, Susan Huleatt  
Guests: Noreen Bachteler, Senator Beth Bye, James Doran, Fern Howden, Leona Gwaz, Kathleen Stalk  
Volunteer Secretary: Amy Lynn Silverman

Phil Walker called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM.

The Minutes of March 18 were approved unanimously.

### ***Chairman's Report***

Phil spoke about reaching out to have more seniors attend the Commission meetings and welcomed those in attendance including Senator Beth Bye.

He encouraged all Commission members to join the senior centers. He noted that he made a presentation about the Senior Job Bank on the community TV station with Deputy Mayor Cantor and Susan Huleatt.

Phil will be absent for the May 20<sup>th</sup> meeting and has asked Ray Guenter to preside. He also reminded everyone to provide their questions/concerns to Donna Sterling so that she may pass them along to Lisa Perrone, District Aide to Congressman John Larson, in advance of the meeting.

Jon Slifka, the newly appointed Governor's Liaison to the Disability Community, will be invited to visit with the Commission in June.

### ***Benefits Sheet***

Ted Thomas reported there are no changes.

### ***Transportation***

No report.

### ***Senior Job Bank***

Jim Doran thanked Phil, Susan and Shari Cantor for appearing on the Channel 5 program. He noted that there will be a SJB banner at the corner of Farmington and Main Street going up on May 12. There are now SJB town coordinators in Bloomfield, Canton, Farmington, Simsbury, and Avon in addition to West Hartford. Finances are in very good shape; the organization has operation within its \$45,000 budget. Over 300 service providers have signed up and over 400 requests have come in for help. He reiterated that recruitment and servicing of customers need to improve, especially with a better retrieval system to allow prompt response to phone requests.

### ***Human Services Report***

Susan Huleatt indicated that the Rental Rebate Program started April 1. It has expanded and new people can apply. There is now \$6.5 million statewide for the program.

She noted that Archibald Stewart, a former Commission member, passed away recently.

### ***Senior Center Reports***

Kathleen Faroni spoke about the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Elmwood Community and Senior Centers titled "Everything Elmwood." There is an open house scheduled for May 3. The Health and Wellness Fair is April 17<sup>th</sup> with 40 vendors expected. This is the center's largest fundraiser. Food Pantry collections continue with a food item being accepted at events in lieu of admission. The Lions' Club eyeglass collection reached 93 in the first month. May is Older Americans Month. The center's Table Tennis Team will compete in the Masters' Event.

Gina Marino submitted a written report in her absence. There was a Tartan Day with Scottish music, dancing and education. Many ongoing events continue. Coming up are the Cinco De Mayo day, Swing Sensation featuring the Hall High Jazz Band and the dedication of the Volunteer Memorial Patio on May 18. The trip to Harlem is sold out. Senior Day is May 21 co-sponsored by Senator Beth Bye and the West Hartford/Bloomfield Health District.

### ***Senator Beth Bye***

While the Legislature is in session now, she was glad to have an opportunity to speak to the Commission members. Senator Bye is the new chair of the Appropriations Committee. With the projected surplus of \$500 million, the committee will be seeing requested increases in many programs. Senator discussed the Home Care Program which includes Medicaid waivers for people to remain in their homes and the bundling of services; DSS processing of Title 19 with 17 staff added; the Consumers' Bill of Rights regarding electric providers; improvements in the Do Not Call list; and Long Term Care insurance with a request to the department to limit increases in premiums to no more than 20%. Also on the agenda are an increase to community spouse allowable limits; preserving Quality of Life; more supportive housing options; respite and transportation; better mental health services in the Affordable Care Act; domestic violence; long-term unemployment; mortgage crisis; job training; youth employment. There is an extra \$1.5 million to West Hartford to contain the tax increase as well as money to the seven largest art museums. Other challenges include roads, saving dollars on inmate medical costs and state dental costs.

She spoke about the potential tax rebate after spending down the long term debt and putting money in the rainy day fund. She suggested that those individuals who did not wish to keep the rebate forward it to their favorite non-profit. Also of note is the need for affordable, stable housing throughout the state.

### ***New Business***

None

The next Commission meeting is Tuesday, May 20, 2014 at 10am.

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Lynn Silverman  
Volunteer Secretary